

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-03 AID-20 IO-14 OMB-01 DPW-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

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R 010505Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1008

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 7543

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SREF, LA

SUBJ: REFUGEE MOVEMENTS

1. ACCOMPANIED BY USAID DIRECOTR MANN, I CALLED ON MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE, PHENG PHONGSAVAN, SEPTEMBER 30, TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBLE RETURN OF REFUGEES TO THEIR FORMER VILLAGES. I REFERRED TO CONVERSATIONS WITH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRIOR HIS DEPARTURE FOR UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, DURING WHICH HE STATED THAT RETURN OF REFUGEES WOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A PRIORITY MATTER BY JCIA. WITH POW EXCHANGE WELL UNDERWAY, IT SEEMED LIKELY THAT DISCUSSIONS OF REFUGEE MOVEMENTS MIGHT COMMENCE SOON AND I SAID I WAS ANXIOUS TO ASSURE THAT THE U.S. ROLE AND THAT OF OTHER DONORS BE CLEARLY ESTABLISHED.

2. I REFERRED TO THE GENERAL INTEREST IN ALL AID-GIVING COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN REFUGEE AFFAIRS AND DREW PHENG'S ATTENTION TO THE ARRIVAL WITHIN NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS OF A PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES AND TO THE OCTOBER 17 DONOR GROUP MEETING IN PARIS. I EXPRESSED OPINION THAT THE PGNU HAD AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE IF COORDINATION OF POTENTIAL REFUGEE MOVES BY THE PGNU WITH FOREIGN DONORS WERE UNDERTAKEN. ESTIMATES SHOULD BE MADE OF THE MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS

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FOR SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS NEEDED FOR REFUGEES WHO

MIGHT RETURN PRIOR TO THE NEXT PLANTING SEASON.

3. PHENG AGREED WITH MY PRESENTATION AND STATED THERE IS ALREADY PLANNING GOING ON WITHIN MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE. WHEN I REMARKED THAT IT WAS MY IMPRESSION SUCH PLANNING WAS TOO MUCH ON A GENERAL AND OVERALL BASIS, PHENG CONCEDED THAT THIS MIGHT WELL BE CASE. I SUGGESTED THAT PLANNING SHOULD BE DONE ON A MORE PRAGMATIC AND REALISTIC BASIS IN WHICH INTERNATIONAL AND BI-LATERAL ORGANIZATIONS COULD PARTICIPATE. I SUGGESTED THAT PLANNING SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ON BASIS OF WHAT REQUIREMENTS EXIST IF 10,000, 2,000 OR 30,000 REFUGEES MOVE TO ASSURE THAT WHATEVER MINIMAL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS ARE REQUIRED BE IN PLACE. ALSO, THE GREAT NUMBER OF AIRPLANES AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. MISSION IN PRIOR YEARS SIMPLY NO LONGER EXIST AS AN AVAILABLE SOURCE OF TRANSPORTATION. OVER-LAND MOVEMENTS MIGHT WELL REQUIRE THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS WHICH GIVE ACCESS TO THE PLAINE DES JARRES AREA. PHENG AGREED THAT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SOCIAL WELFARE SHOULD CALL A MEETING AT WHICH ALL CONCERNED CAN COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS.

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